Army Knowledge Online (AKO) Information Paper
Strategically Transforming How The Army Does Business

SUBJECT: Army Knowledge Online (AKO)

PURPOSE: To provide information on the Army Knowledge Online project.

1. Overview: The Army Portal, Army Knowledge Online (AKO), is a primary component of The Army Knowledge Management (AKM) strategy and The Army Transformation. As the single point of entry into a robust and scalable knowledge management system, AKO is strategically changing the way The Army does business. By enabling greater knowledge sharing among Army communities, AKM fosters improved decision dominance by commanders and business stewards in the battlespace, organizations, and Army's mission processes. AKO is available to Active Duty Army, Army Reserve, Army National Guard, Department of The Army Civilians, Retired Army, and Army sponsored Guest Accounts. The AKM Guidance Memo from the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army stated that all Army individuals will have AKO accounts by 1 October 2001.

2. Features and Benefits

    a. Scenario-based Personalization: By means of scenario-based personalization triggers, AKO can automatically send profile-specific communications based on the actions, profile, or user rank rather than waiting for information to be requested, saving time and resources.

        (1) Future, targeted training information and position openings promote career development among service members.
        (2) e-Business Platform provides enhancements for managing personalization and business rules across The Army enterprise.

    b. Instant messaging: AKO users worldwide can share enterprise information instantly and easily in a fully encrypted environment. By building buddy lists soldiers can communicate via secure instant messaging. When users need to interact with outside contractors or associates, instant messaging links to the leading commercial applications from America Online, Inc., MSN, and Yahoo Inc. Additionally, AKO offers:

        (1) Enhanced quality of life for soldiers and their families providing time and cost savings without concern of geography or schedule.
        (2) Facilitates information sharing through quicker response to questions without hindrance of time delays.

c. Personalization: AKO users now have direct ownership of their web content, offering personalization options to meet their needs. Users may organize their AKO sites to present the information they want to see and need to use.

      (1) Channels can be based on various classifications such as functional, (including weather, travel, news, reference), Army community (Acquisition, Intelligence, Logistics, Operations), keyword (examples) or Army category (branches, installations, or schools).

      (2) Up to six web pages can be created. Existing pages can be removed, moved and renamed and the web pages' colors and font schemes can be tailored to meet the desire of the user.

3. Background: The one stop for Army information, AKO provides a career lifetime email address, customizable portal, and online transaction processing capabilities, accessible to its customers anywhere in the world. Since its inception in 1999, AKO has delivered the tools, information, and services that best help the Army to serve the country at any time and from every station. The Chief Technology Office (formerly the Strategic and Applied Computer Center) of the Chief Information Office currently manages AKO.

4. AKO Services

    a. Army Knowledge Centers. Using information technology to establish a knowledge base for support of contingency operations and lessons learned, knowledge centers continue to be a source of new and collaborative information.

    b. AKO-S. An executive communications tool and information repository for action officers, AKO-S (SIPRNet) is the corporate knowledge interface for Headquarters, Department of the Army. AKO-S offers highly restricted access to sensitive and classified content.

    c. Career Lifetime Email. For unclassified but sensitive messages using public key infrastructure (PKI) technology AKO's email, with its multiple access options, is available anytime, anywhere in the world.

    d. Online transaction processing. To improve business process effectiveness and efficiency as well as to expedite the transformation to e-Business, The Army has web-enabled processes that previously had been time and labor intensive.

      (1) The Defense Financing and Accounting Service travel voucher notification system informs personnel about the status of their travel vouchers.

      (2) Personnel Command's Career Field Designator allows soldiers to access career information and advice from mentors all over the world and to make career designations via the web, virtually eliminating paper and paperwork errors.

      (3) PERSTEMPO records how many days each soldier has been deployed.

    e. Learning opportunities. Distance learning opportunities such as Smartforce CBT, offer warfighters pursuing technical education a convenient way to learn.

f. Secure architecture. A 128-bit encryption similar to online banking systems assures a high degree of security.

g. Army White Pages. A worldwide people locator service providing contact information for anyone with an AKO account.

h. Help Desk. Tier one support assures users receive help and advice as needed.

5. The Future: AKO is the pivotal tool in transforming The Army into a knowledge-based organization. To this end, the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army require that major commands and functional areas streamline business processes and "webify" their applications on AKO by July 2002. To face the many challenges of a changing future AKO continuously enhances its capabilities as technology is developed and the needs of The Army demand. Future AKO capabilities will include:

a. Quicker access through greater bandwidth
b. Ability to update or review personnel records through secure connection to PERMS, using 128-bit encryption
c. Army University Access Online, The Army's higher education program
d. Full integration with the Department of Defense PKI certificates and common access cards
e. On site Army forms for immediate access and printing for online processing

6. Technical Requirements: The system can be accessed from many operating systems, including Microsoft Windows, Mac OS, Unix and Linux.

7. How to Get An AKO Account:
a. Make certain your Internet Browser is version 4.0 or higher. If you have an earlier version, you may not be able to fully utilize AKO.
b. Access Army Knowledge Online (AKO) at www.us.army.mil
c. To register, click on the "I'm a new user" link and fill out the application.

8. For more information: 1-877-AKO-USER